Newsletter
Summer 2017

WiNTR at a glance...

Women in Neurotrauma Research (WiNTR) was established in 1995 to promote international gender equality in neurotrauma research. WiNTR is an organization for all individuals interested in these aims, regardless of gender. We appreciate a wide diversity of ideas and opinions to help the organization successfully meet its goals. The mission of WiNTR is to promote gender equality through mentoring and networking activities.

Message from the Chair
Mayumi Prins, Ph.D.

The National Neurotrauma Society Conference will be held in Snowbird, Utah at the Snowbird Resort and Conference Center July 7-12, 2017. On behalf of WiNTR I would like to personally invite you to attend this year’s WiNTR 2017 sponsored events. I would like to give special thanks to the executive committee members for their hard work this last year. Patricia de la Tremblaye, Ph.D. (WiNTR VISA liaison), Corina Bondi, Ph.D. (Secretary), Bridgette Semple, Ph.D. (Newsletter Editor) as well as Alpa Mahuvakar Ph.D. and Jennica Young. Their hard work has been greatly appreciated.

The mission of WiNTR has been to promote international gender equality in neurotrauma research. This last year at the WiNTR business meeting, there was growing interest in evolving the role of WiNTR within the Neurotrauma Society as an organization focused more broadly on diversity and education. The WiNTR membership has voted to change WiNTR to TEAM Neurotrauma (Training, Education And Mentoring in Neurotrauma). This year the new changes will be introduced to the society following the early WiNTR business meeting. Our new direction will be part of the WiNTR history which will be presented at the “Celebrating 10 years of the WiNTR Visa Award” on Saturday, July 8th 5:00 - 6:00 pm.

Technology is changing rapidly and directly impacts how laboratory members communicate, collaborate, collected data and analyze information. This year the WiNTR lunch session will introduce “The Lab Notebook Evolution” – a review and discussion of pros and cons of digital platforms for laboratory use. Our hope is to influence companies to incorporate the needs of research scientists into existing formats.

Continued on page 2...
Message from the Chair
Mayumi Prins, Ph.D.

We hope that new and current members will be present at the WiNTR business meeting to discuss the formalization of the name change, adjustments to the bylaws and potential new officers to help execute the new vision. The business meeting will be bright and early (with coffee) on Monday July 10th, 2017, 7:00 -7:45 am in Wasatch Room.

Finally, we encourage all delegates to join WiNTR!. I look forward to meeting you in Utah.

Mayumi Prins, Ph.D., WiNTR Chair
Professor of Neurosurgery & UCLA Brain Injury Research Center
Associate Director of Steve Tisch UCLA BrainSPORT
Department of Neurosurgery, Los Angeles, CA 90095

NNS 2017 WiNTR Events in Snowbird, Utah

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<td>Saturday, July 8th</td>
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WiNTR-VISA
Visiting International Scholar Award

The Women in Neurotrauma Research Visiting International Scholar Award (WiNTR-VISA) was established to advance the early careers of women neurotrauma researchers and promote international collaboration, by subsidizing travel to both the NNS Symposium and a brief period of international research training/collaboration in a sponsor’s laboratory.

The 2016 WiNTR-VISA was awarded to Rachel K. Rowe, Ph.D.

Dr. Rachel Rowe, a postdoctoral fellow mentored by Dr. Jonathan Lifshitz at the Barrow Neurological Institute of the Phoenix Children’s Hospital, used the award to visit the laboratory of Dr. James Vickers and Dr. Jenna Ziebell, at Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, at the University of Tasmania in Australia. With a background in sleep and endocrine dysfunction after TBI, the visit provided an opportunity to pursue her interests in the chronic effects of CNS injury, by developing her expertise in histopathological evaluation of the aging brain. “The experience allowed me to focus on a new perspective of my research on aging and dementia in combination with traditional pathological markers of brain injury,” she said. Dr. Rowe plans to continue a working collaborative relationship with Dr. Ziebell and Dr. Vickers, adding to her multidisciplinary research approach.

Outside of the lab, she immersed herself in the local culture by staying with a host family in Tasmania, located in the southern portion of the Australian mainland. “I went grocery shopping with the family and we ate meals together, making the experience authentic. Of course, for our last meal we had prawns on the barbie,” a famous traditional Australian seafood dish. On the weekends, she spent time hiking, visiting wildlife sanctuaries, and exploring the beautiful beaches of Tasmania.

The 2016 NNS meeting in Lexington represented a pivotal point in Dr. Rowe’s career, transitioning from postdoc to faculty member. “It was the last time I was attending as a trainee, and the feedback I received from peers and mentors as the WiNTR-VISA winner and poster finalist, was invaluable to my career.” The WiNTR-VISA came at a perfect time for Dr. Rowe, fostering both her professional and personal development, which was essential for her career transition. Now, as Assistant Professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, Dr. Rowe is looking forward to the 2017 NNS meeting, where she will present the findings from her international research experience. She is also senior author on two other projects being presented by trainees within her research group. Dr. Rowe just submitted her first R01 grant and is working on filling positions in her lab. “As I continue my path in academia I will be dedicated to promoting the visibility and voices of women in science.”
Celebrating 10 Years of the WiNTR-VISA Award

By Patricia de la Tremblaye, Ph.D

The WiNTR – Visiting International Scholar Award (WiNTR-VISA) was founded in 2006, when it was presented at the Society for Neurosciences meeting under the 2005-07 NNS leadership of Diane Snow Ph.D. as President, Courtney Robertson M.D. as Secretary/Treasurer, and Michelle LaPlaca Ph.D. as Newsletter Editor. In 2007, the award was given for the first time at the National Neurotrauma Society symposium, and then awarded to the winning female applicant at each annual symposium thereafter. By providing financial support and recognition for a young female neuroscientist, the WINTR-VISA supports the mission of WiNTR to promote international gender equality in the field of neurotrauma, and to foster the professional development of young female Neurotrauma researchers.

At this year’s meeting, on Saturday, July 8th from 5:00 -6:00 pm, a scientific session will celebrate the 10-year Celebration of the WiNTR-VISA Award. Presenters include Dr. Virginia Newcombe, Ph.D., who won the award in 2007 (now a clinician scientist at the University of Cambridge), and Dr. Michelle H. Theus, Ph.D., who won the award in 2010 (now an Assistant Professor at Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine). The current WiNTR President, Dr. Mayumi Prins, Ph.D., and WiNTR-VISA Liaison, Dr. Patricia de la Tremblaye, Ph.D., will chair the session.

The WiNTR-VISA committee is pleased to announce Dr. Susana Cerqueira as the 2017 WiNTR Visiting International Scholar.

Dr. Cerqueira is currently a Postdoctoral Associate for the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at the Miller School of Medicine of the University of Miami. Mentored by Dr. Mary Bunge, Dr. Cerqueira is investigating bioengineering strategies to be combined with Schwann cell transplantation, with the goal of improving the efficacy of cell transplantation for spinal cord injury. Her recent data will be presented in two poster sessions at the NNS meeting.

Dr. Cerqueira will use the WiNTR-VISA award to travel to Bonn, Germany, to the laboratory of Dr. Frank Bradke, Professor at the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE), an expert in advanced imaging techniques for the examination of regulatory mechanism axon growth. There, she will receive training in light sheet fluorescence microscopy and two-photon microscopy to evaluate Schwann cell survival and axon regeneration after spinal cord injury. During the 10 Years of the WiNTR VISA Award celebration, Dr. Cerqueira will present a summary of her current research and highlight goals for her international training experience.
After completing a B.S. in Zoology and Biochemistry at Colorado State University, Dr. Ashley Fenn received her Ph.D. in neuroscience from The Ohio State University in 2014, where she focused on neuroimmunology under the guidance of Associate Professor Jonathan Godbout, Ph.D. Since then, Dr. Fenn has held a postdoctoral position at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Systems Biology. Dr. Fenn's scientific research career has covered a broad array of topics, ranging from the influence of peripheral inflammation on microglial reactivity after diffuse brain injury, to the effect of androgens on hibernation in arctic ground squirrels, and most recently, a focus on monocytosis in atherosclerosis. Now, however, Dr. Fenn is shifting her career path away from bench science and into management consulting.

The decision to make a career change was not a quick or easy one. “It was a feeling I’ve had since grad school, but was hesitant to follow. As many students who are not exposed to anything but academia during their Ph.D., I felt I was a failure if I didn't at least try to succeed in academia - something I realized was completely misguided during my post-doc.” The perceived randomness and subjectivity of funding success for herself and colleagues was a motivating factor for Dr. Fenn to explore alternative career options. At the same time, she completed an individual development plan (IDP) which revealed a mismatch between her personality traits and an academic profession. “It was time for a change,” she reflects.

“Joining the The Massachusetts General Hospital Postdoc Association was an absolute blessing,” Dr. Fenn notes. The Association is comprised of eight sub-committees, each dedicated to a different area of career development (e.g. Industry Careers, Consulting, Science Communications, Academia).

After exploring Industry R&D and then Science Communication options, she attended a consulting information session where she observed people practicing ‘cases’ as you would in a consulting interview. The real-life format, whereby consultants tackle a large but focused problem every 8 - 12 weeks, was particularly intriguing. “In the lab, I’ve had a large variety in my projects, so this high degree of diversity was very appealing,” she said. As a management consultant, Dr. Fenn will address issues such as why market shares are declining for a retail client, or how an oil company can be more energy efficient. The team-oriented nature of the work, and high compensation compared to academia, were also attractive elements of a career in consulting.

Dr. Fenn decided to join a volunteer consulting group and worked with two start-up companies in Boston over a 12 week period. “I absolutely loved the experience and knew that this is what I wanted to be doing for the next 3-5 years of my life.”
At the 2016 WiNTR Business Meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, members were asked to consider the future of WiNTR including its name and purpose. In September, WiNTR members were polled on whether to change the name. Results indicated that 74% were in favor of emphasizing education, training and mentoring for all trainees, regardless of gender. In addition, the results showed that 58% supported a corresponding name change to reflect this new role.

Given the majority position, the WiNTR Officers solicited new acronyms and four options were offered to members: TEAM Neurotrauma (Training, Education And Mentoring in Neurotrauma), WINTR (Welcoming Inclusion in Neurotrauma), NMTG (Neurotrauma Mentoring and Training Group), and MINT (Mentoring in Neurotrauma).

With 82 responders, the most popular option was TEAM Neurotrauma (45%; 37 votes), followed by MINT (26%; 21 votes), WINTR (24%; 20 votes) and NMTG (5%; 4 votes).

So what happens next? Watch this space… and come along to the 2017 Business Meeting (Monday July 10th, 7:00 am) to participate in the decision making process!

2017 Officers:
Chair: Mayumi Prins, Ph.D.
Outgoing Chair: Linda Noble, Ph.D.
Secretary/Treasurer: Corina Bondi, Ph.D.
WiNTR-VISA Liaison: Patricia de la Tremblaye, Ph.D.
Newsletter Editor: Bridgette Semple, Ph.D.

WiNTR Member Announcements

Associate Professor Cristina Morganti-Kossmann, Ph.D. (Monash University), has been invited to speak at the upcoming 7th Pannonian Symposium on Central Nervous System Injury) in Pecs, Hungary (August 30th to September 1st 2017). Her presentation will focus on the EPO (Erythropoietin)-TBI clinical trial in Melbourne, Australia.

Join WiNTR! https://www.nationalneurotraumasociety.org/wintr/wintr-membership/
Contribute to the next newsletter! Share your news with the WiNTR community!
Contact Bridgette Semple, bridgette.semple@unimelb.edu.au
The WiNTR Networking Reception at the 2016 NNS meeting was held on Monday June 27th at West Sixth Brewery, a craft microbrewery in Lexington, Kentucky.

Delegates were treated to samples of craft beers including the Brewery’s flagship IPA, as well as a range of tasty morsels prepared from locally-sourced produce. Lively conversation was interspersed with a tour of Food Chain, Kentucky’s first indoor aquaponics farm. This innovative nonprofit organization, established in an abandoned bread factory, utilizes a creative approach to combine aquaculture (farming fish) with hydroponics (growing plants without soil). The farm consists of a deep-water re-circulating system with an impressive 7,000 gallons of water, 500 tilapia fish, and thousands of plants!

Photographs courtesy of Beth Kelly Photography; www.bethkellyphotography.com
Letting go of the guilt: Striking a workable balance

By Audrey Lafrenaye, Ph.D.

It’s 3:42 pm on a Wednesday afternoon and you’re praying that the traffic light turns green, and magically the distance between you and the school shrinks by half. Your heart is racing, your palms are sweating, you’re gripping the wheel too tightly, and you’re pretty sure you’ve just won the “worst mom/dad ever” award from whatever committee is responsible for doling out negligent parent awards. Your child has an afterschool gymnastics class, and you’re running late to pick them up.

Why? Because you lost track of time while talking to your technician about an exciting planned experiment. When you finally get to the gym 5 minutes late, you fight off the embarrassment that comes with your child squarely announcing to anyone who will listen that we are late (again!) because mommy/daddy was at work.

Everyone else seems to have achieved a level of temporal organizational skills that lend themselves to successfully arriving at afterschool commitments on time. What is wrong with you that you can earn a Ph.D. but can’t get to gymnastics on time?

Based on numerous conversations I’ve had over the years with fellow students, post-docs, and now junior faculty, we have all been in that car, having a mini panic attack because we are late to something for our family or friends. Or have missed a professional deadline due to a social event. Many trainees and junior faculty feel overwhelmed by all the conflicting demands on their time. Going hand in hand with this feeling is a pervasive guilt that infuses itself into much of our days. “Why can’t I figure out how to juggle everything?” “None of my other colleagues seem to be having as much trouble as I am.” “How do all the people I look up to in the field do both amazing science and maintain a happy and healthy home life?” “What am I doing wrong?”

After talking to many of our WiNTR Expert’s over the years, the apparent key to a happy work/life balance was rather surprising: stop feeling guilty about your work/life balance.

From speaking with many successful researchers in the field, I’ve come to understand that infrequent pangs of guilt are helpful indicators that your reality might not be in alignment with the work/life balance you are striving for. These pangs of guilt shouldn’t be ignored. However - the consistent pervasive guilt over being a scientist while trying to live a life outside the lab that hangs in the air like a suffocating fog, doesn’t help anyone! To write this article, I’ve spoken with several WiNTR researchers, many of whom note that they have addressed this guilt in some way. Indeed, I was surprised to hear they some no longer feel that guilt. Many successful scientists seem to consistently be running late, but do not exhibit the same overwhelming sense of guilt that emanates from myself and many of my peers when we describe the same occurrences. “We are all too busy to waste time on guilt,” one of our experts observed.

At this point in time you might be thinking: “Well, that’s easier said than done.” I agree! In fact, as I write this curled up with my laptop at my parent’s house, I’m feeling guilty that my kids and parents are waiting on me to finish so that we can go shopping together. No, the irony that I am writing an article about letting go of guilt over your work/life balance while feeling guilty over my work/life balance is not lost on me. Shifting my perspective, however, I realize that as long as my kids are happy spending time with their grandparents, and I am able to get work done to my satisfaction, there is nothing to feel guilty about.

Continued on page 9...
Letting go of the guilt: Striking a workable balance

Maybe instead of spending more time honing our organizational or time management skills, we should first work on forgiving ourselves for doing what we love, and having a life outside of it. In my experiences, this seems particularly pertinent for women scientists. Many of us seem to feel that we have to work harder than our male counterparts to get ahead at work, while also shouldering much of the household responsibilities and mental strain. But why do we feel we need to be superwomen? Or, more importantly, why do we even think superwomen exist outside of comic books? As one of our expert’s put it: “There is no prize for being a supermom.”

So here are some helpful tips that I’ve gleaned from experts within the WiNTR community, regarding letting go of your guilt and striking a work/life balance that works for you.

1) **Keep both your work and life events on a calendar**, possibly the same calendar. Identify the potential conflicts early, and strategize to reduce the likelihood of missing something.

2) **Don’t say yes to everything, and learn not to feel guilty about saying no.** No one can do everything they are asked to do. For each task you agree to, factor in the things you will not be able to do by agreeing to the task. This is a skill that doesn’t appear to come naturally to most of us, but is necessary for survival. Practice saying no to things that aren’t worth what you would need to be giving up to do them (both at work and at home). Then, and I think this is the hardest part, don’t feel guilty about saying no.

3) **Learn to identify when you’re working effectively, and leverage the flexibility working as a scientist affords you to your advantage.** Science happens all the time, at all hours of the day and night, including on weekends and during holidays – there is always something that needs to be done. For years I have seen this flexibility in a negative light: if science never sleeps, neither can I. Recently, I’m trying to instead see this flexibility as an opportunity to fit everything I want to do into my day, without the shackles of a required 9-5 job. If you want to have dinner with your family every day, then build that into your normal work schedule. Once you set the standard for your personal schedule, the guilt over saying no to things that fall within those non-work times diminishes drastically. Choose when you do your best work and work then.

4) **“Set expectations appropriately in order to assure that few disappointments arise.”** (Dr. Jonathan Lifshitz, Ph.D.). If, for instance, your kids understand that mommy is staying home to finish working on a work/life balance article while they go out shopping with their grandparents, there won’t be any hurt feelings. Or, if your PI understands that you won’t have that paper draft finished until next week, they won’t be disappointed when they don’t have it the next day. Aim to keep everyone’s expectations in a realistic space, so that you don’t feel guilty about not meeting the unrealistic expectations, since they were never there in the first place.

I hope that you’ve found some part of this perspective helpful! Remember that you are not alone in your struggles balancing work and life. Most of our WiNTR experts have gone through many of the things you are currently dealing with, and have figured out unique strategies that might also help you.

Reach out and ask!

[https://www.nationalneurotraumasociety.org/wintr/ask-an-expert](https://www.nationalneurotraumasociety.org/wintr/ask-an-expert)
• Summary of the 2015 WiNTR Business Meeting minutes by Ava Puccio, RN, Ph.D.

• Financial Report:
  A budget report was delivered by treasurer Ava Puccio, RN, Ph.D. with the assistance of Ms. Sheilah Jewart, CMP. Dr. Puccio and Ms. Jewart created a more detailed budget report spreadsheet that includes all expenses and income. Overall income was $47,126.93 and overall expenses were $41,982.28. The balance carried forward from the previous year was $6,457.65, and the current balance for this year is $5,144.65.

• Review of the WiNTR Bylaws:
  Chair Linda Noble, Ph.D. led a discussion on potential revisions for the WiNTR Bylaws, and clarification that length of term for the following positions is two years: Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and International Liaison/Website Coordinator. No votes or changes were made.

• Report on the Summer 2016 WiNTR Newsletter:
  Newsletter Editors Bridgette Semple Ph.D. and Patricia Washington Ph.D., reported that the Summer 2016 WiNTR Newsletter was published and distributed via email blast, social media and printed for in-person distribution at NNS and Society for Neuroscience. The comments on the newsletter were very positive. The target number of editions per year was discussed, as well as suggestions for improving the newsletter production process. Dr. Semple will continue as newsletter editor for 2017.

• “Ask An Expert” Update:
  Creator and coordinator Diane Snow, Ph.D. delivered an update on the usage of the “Ask An Expert” program. Participation by students was lower than expected, and ways to improve the interface and interaction were discussed. Suggestions included presenting the some or all the experts with a rotating question (once a month) and posting their answers on the NNS/WiNTR website, social media, etc. Dr. Washington volunteered to help.

• Presentation on gender representation in NNS and WiNTR membership:
  Dr. Washington presented data related to gender representation in NNS/symposium (i.e. speakers, chairs, etc) compared to membership as a whole. Members discussed if WiNTR is meeting goals of the organization. WiNTR membership data that showed a reduction in student membership was discussed and suggestions were made on how to increase membership, including making WiNTR more inclusive to all trainees and mentors. Changing the name of WiNTR to make the name less women-specific was discussed, and it was decided that members would be asked if they 1) wanted to change the name, and if yes, 2) vote on potential name options.

• Announcement of the 2016 WiNTR VISA awardee:
  2014-2016 WiNTR-VISA liaison Dr. Washington announced the 2016 WiNTR-VISA awardee: Rachel Rowe, Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow in the Translational Neurotrauma Research Program at the Barrow Neurological Institute at Phoenix Children’s Hospital.
In her quest to land a consulting job, Dr. Fenn immersed herself in consulting interview preparation texts, online forums and practice case sessions. Her hard work has paid off, and in August 2017, she will commence a management consulting role.

The future is now full of both excitement and trepidation for Dr. Fenn. “I'm most looking forward to a complete and utter change in life,” she enthused. “New material, new concepts, new objectives - I feel like I'm starting my career all over and it's thrilling. I've always loved being a student, so the idea of learning something completely new and stepping out of my comfort zone is exciting!”

On the other hand, she reserves some apprehension for the high level of travel that will be required for her new position, and recognizes that managing work-life balance will be a challenge.

Prior to commencing her new role in just a few weeks, Dr. Fenn is wrapping up her laboratory work, enjoying time with her gorgeous baby boy, and studying a mini-MBA course to ensure that she hits the ground running!

Sources: Personal communication with Dr. Ashley Fenn; http://www.massgeneral.org/research/news/PostdocProfiles/postdoc-profile-Fenn.aspx

Continued from page 10...

Minutes, WiNTR Business Meeting 2016

• Change in procedure for selection of WiNTR-VISA grant liaison:

  It was decided that the awardee from the previous year would take on the role of the grant liaison for the following year. Patricia B. de la Tremblaye, PhD was named WiNTR-VISA liaison for 2017.

• Announcement of the 2016-2018 WiNTR officers:

  Dr. Noble delivered the results of the election for the 2016-2018 WiNTR officers. Mayumi Prins, Ph.D. was elected Chair and Corina Bondi, Ph.D. was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Transfer of duties between outgoing and incoming officers was discussed.

• Presentation on the 2017 NNS Meeting by Candace Floyd:

  2016-2017 NNS President Candace Floyd, Ph.D. presented an overview of the venue for the 2017 NNS meeting in Snowbird, Utah. In addition to providing information regarding the venue, lodging and logistics, Dr. Floyd highlighted suggestions for increasing diversity, including emphasizing the need for diversity in the program formation with the program committee, writing grants for scholarships for students from diverse backgrounds to attend, and reaching out academic programs that do not typically attend. Dr. Floyd also proposed to combine the WiNTR networking event with the primary NNS social event.